WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY—Founded December 19, 1857 DECEMBER 1976

WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Harriet and I were quite intrigued with David Lewis' slides and descriptions of Macon, Michigan and the Dynamic Kernels Mill there. So one Sunday recently we drove down to see it.

It is a village out of the past. There are no service stations, no movie theaters, no supermarkets. Just a cluster of a dozen or so old, restored homes, a church, a country grocery store and the mill and Boysville. The homes are beautiful. You would like to live in any one of them. Mmmm, the smell when you step in the village store. Only age can give a store such an aroma.

The most interesting thing to us, is that we have lived in this area for so many years and have never seen Macon before. It points up to us, that with all of our poking around, there are still hundreds of interesting and picturesque places and things to see in little old Washtenaw County. (Macon is just a long hop out-of-county). And they have as much beauty as any other in the country. If you have other gems hidden away, I would like to know about them.

And now for a very important matter. As noted elsewhere in this issue of the Impressions, we will have a special meeting in January for a presentation by our Museum Committee. I hope we will have a large turnout, so that as many people as possible can view and vote on this important proposition.

Tom Lacy

COVERED BRIDGES TO BE JANUARY MEETING TOPIC

Covered bridges will be the topic of the January WCHS meeting at 8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 27, in Liberty Hall. Clare Hoedeman, highway engineer with the Washtenaw County Road Commission, will share his collection of slides and other covered bridge mementos.

He became involved with repair of a couple of covered bridges while working in Kent County 1937-47, and this sparked his interest.

COUNTY CALENDAR

CHELSEA HISTORICAL SOCIETY—8 p.m. Monday, January 10, at the Congregational Church. Lydia Muncy of WCHS and the Washtenaw Historic District Commission will speak on "Oral History".

MILAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY—Meets third Wednesday of month at 7:30 p.m. in the Milan Community House.

SALEM HISTORICAL SOCIETY—Meets third Monday of month at 7:30 p.m. at Salem Town Hall.

SALINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY—Jane Hughes of Handicraft Furniture in Ann Arbor will speak on "Combining Old and New Furnishings in Your Decor" at 8 p.m. Tuesday, January 18, in the Blue Lounge at Saline High School.

YPSILANTI MUSEUM—The Ypsilanti Historical Society plans to "lavishly" decorate the museum for Christmas. It is open to visitors Friday, Saturday and Sundays from 2 to 5 p.m. except for Sunday Dec. 12 when the membership Christmas party is planned.

WCHS CHRISTMAS PARTY TO BE SUNDAY, DEC. 19 AT CITY'S KEMPF HOUSE

The WCHS Christmas party will be an open house at Kempf House, 312 S. Division St., Ann Arbor, from 3 to 5 p.m. Sunday, December 19.

Mr. and Mrs. Paul R. Kempf will act as host and hostess for the affair at his boyhood home which is now a city museum. His father, Reuben H. Kempf, bought the little Greek Revival style house in 1890. His parents were both accomplished musicians and teachers, well known in Ann Arbor for many years.

The Kempf's Steinway piano, the first concert grand piano in Ann Arbor on which Paderewski once played, is in the house along with a number of other antique furnishings including a desk used by Michigan's first governor. About half the furnishings are on loan from WCHS.

Cookies and punch will be served. Irene Lawliss and Dorothy Ouradnik are co-chairmen of refreshments. One of them will be on hand at Kempf house Saturday, Dec. 18, between 1:30 and 5 p.m. so that those who signed up to donate Christmas cookies may deliver them.

HERE'S A GIFT IDEA

You can send *The Washtenaw Impressions* to a friend as a gift and add him or her to the membership list for $3 per person or $6 for husband and wife.

Send the recipient's name and address along with the fee to Mrs. E. P. Whelan, membership chairman, 3475 Brentwood, Ann Arbor, Mi. 48105. And don't forget to renew your own membership.

COUNTY'S OLDEST BUSINESSES HONORED

Washtenaw County's three oldest operating businesses were honored at the November WCHS meeting. One of them is the oldest business in the state of Michigan still on the original site.

That is Mann's Feed Mill of Manchester, the current name of a mill business started there in 1832.

Sharing county honors with the mill were Mack and Mack Furniture Co. of Ypsilanti in the same building at 211 W. Michigan Ave. since 1850, and the Muehlig Funeral Chapel, Inc., of Ann Arbor, started in 1852 at a different location. Only the latter firm has had a member of the same family in it from the beginning.

The businesses were found in a search instituted by the Historical Society of Michigan. The oldest continually operating business in the state is a surveying firm in Detroit, George Jerome & Co., founded in 1828. The Sumnerville Tavern in Cass County, founded in 1835, was the oldest business in its original building.

WCHS Vice-President Stuart Thayer outlined the history of the local businesses. Dr. Robert M. Warner, director of the Michigan Historical Collections at the U-M Bentley Library, presented certificates to the local businesses on behalf of the state society.

Accepting the awards were Ronald and Judy Mann who took over the Manchester mill just this year, Atwood McAndrew, Jr., of Mack and Mack and Robert E. Muehlig of the Muehlig Chapel.

The Manchester mill has endured for 144 years in spite of fires, floods and foreclosure.

The first mill on the site, a flour mill, was built in 1832 on Main Street (formerly Exchange Place) beside the Raisin River, a year before the first bridge there. John Gilbert from Lenox, Mass., a veteran of the War of 1812, took the land up from the government in 1826.

Gilbert let the building contract to Emanuel Case and W. S. and Elijah Carr cut and hewed the lumber. Richard Fogy was hired as mill wright to set up the machinery.

The mill burned twice, first in 1853, and again in 1924 when it was rebuilt as a feed mill. The dam washed out in 1875 and again in 1908. In 1908, a temporary dam erected after the March 10 washout itself washed out in May.

There were a succession of owners including the People's Bank of Manchester who foreclosed on the property in 1896. The others after Gilbert were Stephen Fargo, 1839; Ben Ford, Cyrus Smith and Luther Field, 1841; James Fountain 1866; George Sedgewick, 1877; Noah Holt, 1886; Lewis Lonier and William Hoffer, 1902; William Bliss and Sons, 1930; and E. G. Mann & Sons, 1940.

The first wooden bridge over the river by the mill was replaced by a steel truss bridge in 1881 and a concrete bridge in 1929. The latter was rebuilt four years ago.

Quite commonly in the past the furniture and undertaking business was combined in one firm. This was true of both Mack and Mack Furniture Co. and the Muehlig Funeral Chapel before they specialized in the one or the other. Presumably the same woodworking skills could be turned to either cabinet or coffin making.

The Mack and Mack of the firm name were not a couple of Germans but a couple of Scotsmen, Mc Andrew and McElcheran.

Atwood McAndrew, Sr., speaking to the Society in 1944, explained that the First National Bank in Ypsilanti thought the name so cumbersome they shortened it to "Mack and Mack" in their records and the partners adopted it.

The furniture business was started in 1850 by David Coon, with George McElcheran as chair maker. In 1872 Coon sold to Harrison Vinkle, a furniture merchant and undertaker of Dexter who liked to take afternoon naps in one of his coffins.

McElcheran ran the Ypsilanti store and four years later became a partner of Thomas McAndrew who bought Vinkle's interest. McAndrew handled the furniture and McElcheran the undertaking.

McAndrew had grown up in the furniture business. His father, William McAndrew, was a Scottish immigrant cabinetmaker who made furniture in Rawsonville and Ypsilanti from 1849 to 1876. Young Thomas had daily brought the furniture his father made from Rawsonville to the firm's Ypsilanti store. But by 1876 factory made furniture was replacing handmade and his father's firm was dissolved that year.

William McAndrew died in 1895 and McElcheran retired in 1905. Atwood McAndrew, Sr., joined the firm a year later. Thomas McAndrew retired in 1939 and Atwood, Jr., joined the firm in 1947.

The Muehlig Funeral Home was established in Ann Arbor in 1852 by Florian Muehlig in the 200 block of South Main St. He was succeeded by his son, John, and later his grandson, Florian J. Muehlig. The business was moved to 307 S. Main in 1897 and to the present location in 1929.

The business at 307 S. Main was on the second and third floors above what were once Mummery Drug and Ziefle and Nissle's shoe

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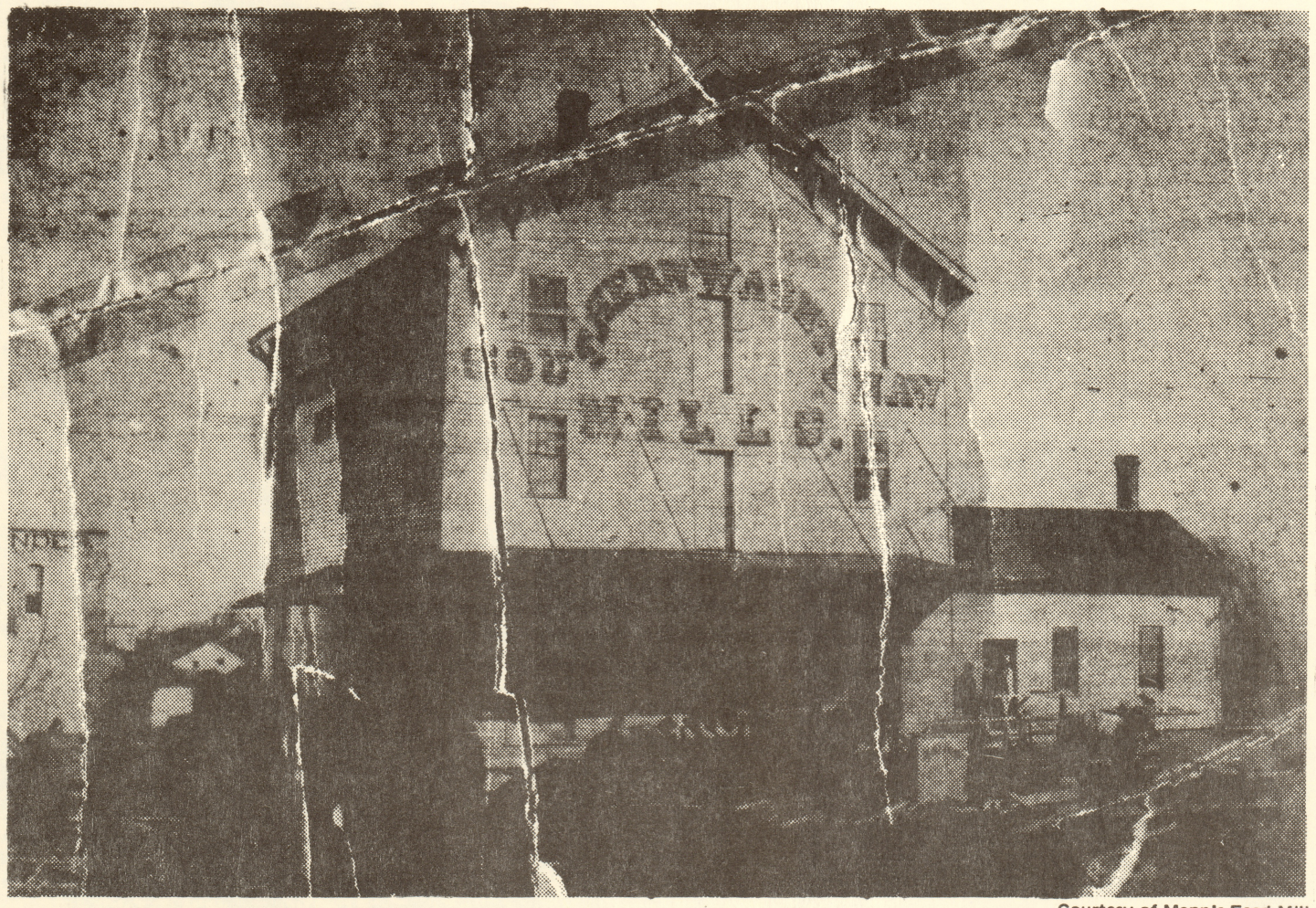

Courtesy of Mann's Feed Mill

Southern Washtenaw Flour Mill of Manchester in 1886, a predecessor of the present Mann's Feed Mill. A mill has operated on that site beside the Raisin River since 1832.

George McElcheran (above) is one of the "Mack's" of Mack and Mack Furniture Co. of Ypsilanti. The business has operated in the same building at 211 W. Michigan Ave. since 1850. Courtesy of Mrs. Ray Fletcher

FLORIAN MUEHLIG;

NO. 37 MAIN STREET,

Respectfully announces to the citizens of Ann Arbor and vicinity, that he has on hand a

LARGE STOCK —OF— FURNITURE,

Which will be sold very low. Also, a large stock of

Metalic Burial CASES AND COFFINS.

A Good Hearse,

Always in attendance. Persons wishing their friends laid out can call on us night or day, free of charge.

All Orders will be Strictly Attended to.

Courtesy of Ann Arbor Public Library

The Muehlig Funeral Chapel, started in 1852 in Ann Arbor, had this advertisement in the 1868 Chapin's Ann Arbor City Directory.

store, Fred Rogers, a retired member of the firm recalls.

That was only a few doors from the Muehlig home at 315 S. Main later torn down and replaced by the Stein and Goetz Sporting Goods Store. John Muehlig's family included Bertha (Bertie) who started B. E. Muehlig Dry Goods, Florian J., Edward, a hardware merchant, Ernest and Walter.

The firm's officers in 1929 were Edward R. Muehlig, president; Roland G. Schmid, vice-president; Fred H. Rogers, manager; Ernest O. Muehlig, business manager; and Emma B. Graf, secretary-treasurer

The present Robert E. Muehlig of the firm is the son of Edward.

The house at the present location on the southeast corner of S. Fourth Ave. and William St. was built in 1884 as the home of J. T. Jacobs, a clothing merchant. John Gates designed and constructed it and did the carvings. It was later used as a hospital by Dr. J. B. Lynde. Muehlig's purchased it from his sister who survived him.

Editor: Alice Ziegler, 663-8826
Keylining: Thomas C. Lacy
Printing and Typesetting: Courtesy of Ann Arbor Federal Savings and Drury, Lacy, Inc.

WASHTENAW OF 100 YEARS AGO: U-M FENCED TO KEEP OUT COWS, 'OLD' COURT HOUSE NOT YET BUILT, MICHIGAN CENTRAL RIDERS OGLED YPSILANTI UNDERWEAR GIRL

What was Washtenaw County like in 1876 when the United States was celebrating its centennial?

Hazel Proctor, WCHS treasurer and museum committee chairman, presented a glimpse as contained in old pictures collected from around the county and copied as slides. Some views were earlier, some later, but almost all harked back to the horse and buggy era. A couple were made from tintypes.

In 1876, the University of Michigan campus was fenced to keep out wandering cows and campus grass was cut only once a year. It was sold for hay by the janitor as part of his wages.

In downtown Ann Arbor, the "old" Court House with its tower had not yet replaced the first Greek Revival style building of 1833. The Gregory House (later called Municipal Court Building) was across Main St. at Huron and two blocks north on Main at Miller was Dr. Chase's Steam Printing House (still standing).

An 1862 photo of the northwest corner of Main and Washington Sts. in Ann Arbor, now occupied by Muehlig's Dry Goods and Goodyear's Department Store, shows plain frame buildings housing stores including boot and shoe stores and a harness shop. By the time of the centennial, those buildings had been replaced by new brick and masonry structures with fancy cornices.

Street scenes in villages around the county were similar to Ann Arbor with corniced buildings, gas lights and horses and buggies. (By 1892 Manchester had electric street lights.)

Streets and roads of the county were of dirt, including the Chicago Turnpike through Ypsilanti and Saline. Unless covered with snow the roads were either muddy or dusty. Around Ann Arbor, Plymouth Rd. and Pontiac Trail were country lanes and open country started a short distance out Liberty St. The road southwest of Saline (Monroe St.) was a toll road. It cost one cent a mile for one horse and conveyance, two cents per mile for two horses.

Even the villages had hotels and opera houses as well as saloons, blacksmith and harness shops.

Manchester had a three story hotel boasting running water. It was drawn to a tank on the third floor by a windmill and ran down by gravity. Public baths in the hotel were a popular weekend occupation of the villagers. Manchester also had the Reichert Health Spa, later the Green Hotel.

In Dexter the Stebbins House was on the site now occupied by the frozen food lockers.

Nearly every community had a band and a Fourth of July celebration annually, usually with parades, speaking, picnics and fireworks. In 1876 the Saline Band rode in a fancy green and gold serpentine wagon drawn by four white horses. The wagon was specially made for the centennial by the Schairer Brothers Carriage Factory in Saline.

The Michigan Central Railroad crossed the county, following the Huron River from Ypsilanti to Dexter. It passed by the Ypsilanti Underwear Mills. The rear of this building, visible from the train tracks, had a painting three stories high of a curvacious lady dressed only in the wares of the mill.

It prompted various responses from appreciative passengers including:

"If love grows cold,
do not despair,
There is always
Ypsilanti Underwear."

There was a railroad depot at Geddesburg (Dixboro Rd. near Huron River Dr.) and west of Ann Arbor the railroad passed the thriving woolen and wrapping paper mills at Foster Station (Maple Rd. at Huron River Dr.). Before the days of refrigeration, ice was cut along the river and loaded onto railroad cars for shipment.

While the Michigan Central had reached Ann Arbor in 1839, the first train did not reach Saline until 1870 in time for the July 4th celebration that year.

At the time of the Centennial volunteer fire companies protected Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. In Ypsilanti, the Cornwell Paper Company

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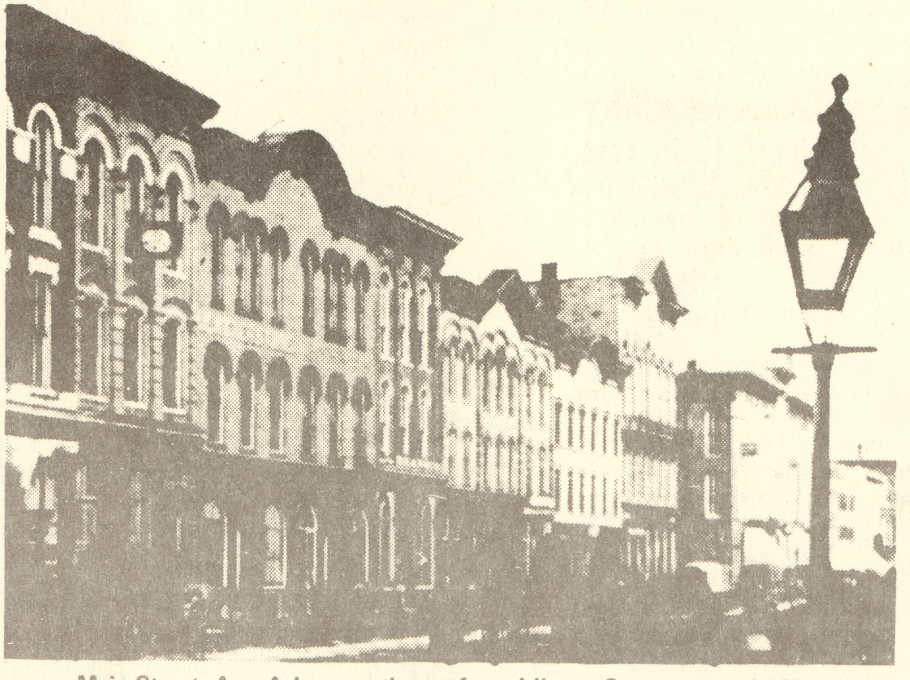
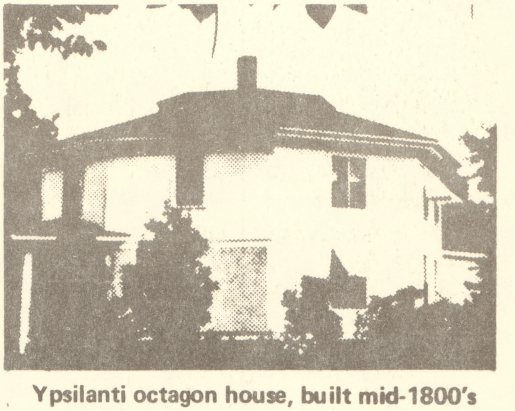


Main Street, Ann Arbor, northwest from Liberty Street, around 1870.

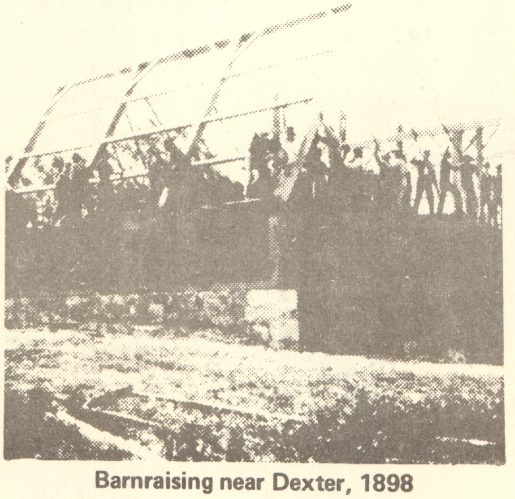
Saline harness shop, 1866, reproduced from tintype.

Peninsular Ice Co. wagon, Ypsilanti, 1866

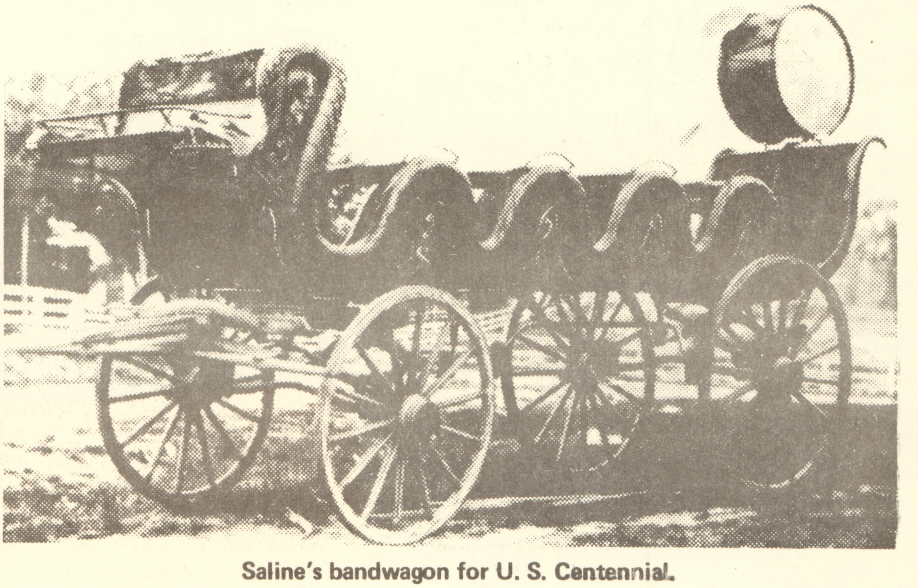


Ypsilanti octagon house, built mid-1800's

All photos courtesy of Ann Arbor Federal.



Barnraising near Dexter, 1898



Saline's bandwagon for U. S. Centennial.

(continued from page 4)

paid for a gleaming new steam pumper in 1870 so Ypsi's first volunteer fire company adopted the name "Cornwell Number One". Each man had a bright red uniform shirt with a fancy Gothic initial, but these were used only on formal occasions. There was no time to don them as they dashed to a fire from their jobs or homes.

An undated picture shows Ann Arbor's four man police force. By 1908 it had doubled to eight. Home delivery of mail began in Ann Arbor in 1886 and there were paid firemen beginning in 1888.

HELP WITH GENEALOGY AS NEAR AS YOUR PHONE

WCHS members wishing help with family history research are invited to telephone any member of the Genealogy Section according to Dr. and Mrs. William F. Bender, chairman and secretary, respectively.

They will be glad to answer questions and advise you and can send beginning charts and resource lists free. If you want them to do detailed research, even the whole job, that may be arranged for a moderate fee to cover expenses.

Among those ready to help are Alloa Anderson, 663-2128; the Benders, 668-6925; Irene Lawliss, 994-0588; Peggy Lambert, 971-2471; and Ralph Muncy, 663-3761.

U-M EXHIBIT FEATURES NEW ENGLAND FOLK ART

An exhibit of 53 early 19th century New England paintings by "The Borden Limner and His Contemporaries" is now on display at the University of Michigan Museum of Art through January 16.

It shows for the first time in public many portraits attributed to anonymous itinerant artists called "limners" from the word "illuminators".

The museum is open Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m.

The exhibit is a result of painstaking research by Dr. Robert Bishop, a U-M alumnus and museum editor at Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum.

SPECIAL MEETING POSTPONED

While negotiations with the City of Ann Arbor for the Barton Power House as a possible WCHS museum are "jelling", a special meeting to consider the project will not be held until January, President Thomas F. Lacy said. The date will be announced later.

LOOKING FOR A GIFT IDEA? HOW ABOUT 'THE WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS'?

For $3 a year you can subscribe for a friend and add him or her to the membership list as well. ($6 for husband and wife.)

To: Name

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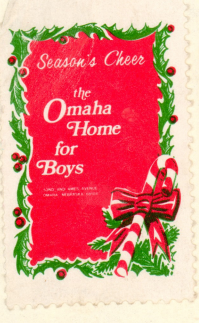
City State Zipcode

From: Name

Address

City State Zipcode

Send to: Mrs. E. P. Whelan, Membership Chairman, 3475 Brentwood, Ann Arbor, Mi. 48105



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Sunday
8:00 P.M.
LIBERTY HALL
ANN ARBOR FEDERAL SAVINGS
LIBERTY AT DIVISION
Dec. 19, 1976

Miss Eileen Harrison
322 E. Cross St.
Ypsilanti, Mi. 48197

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WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
December 14, 1976
4:00 PM
Liberty Hall -- AAFS

1. Call to order - T. Lacy
2. Minutes of Oct. 5, 1976 - E. Morton
3. V.P. Report - S. Thayer
4. Treasurer's Report - H. Proctor
5. Membership Report - R. Whelan
6. Curator's Report - S. Thayer
7. Genealogy Section - By-Laws - Dr. Bender
8. New/Old Business
9. Adjournment